

ENGL S128: Readings in Comparative World English Literatures  
Summer 2021

Professor Cajetan Iheka

Meeting Times: MW 1-4:15

Zoom Office Hours: By appointment

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An introduction to the literary traditions of the Anglophone world in a variety of poetic and narrative forms and historical contexts. Emphasis on developing skills of literary interpretation and critical writing; diverse linguistic, cultural and racial histories; and on the politics of empire and liberation struggles. Authors may include Daniel Defoe, Mary Prince, J. M. Synge, James Joyce, C. L. R. James, Claude McKay, Jean Rhys, Yvonne Vera, Chinua Achebe, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, J. M. Coetzee, Brian Friel, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Alice Munro, Derek Walcott, and Patrick White, among others.

**Online Class Expectations**

This class requires the same level of hard work, professionalism, and courtesy that is expected in face-to-face classrooms. You will be expected to do the assigned readings, write papers, respond to other students' reading responses, and participate in the weekly synchronous meetings that this class requires. Your weekly discussion will be done in groups which I will assign at the beginning of the course.

**Required Texts**

Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* (1883) (Penguin Classics) 9780140437492 \$15.00

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, *A Grain of Wheat* (1967) (Penguin Books) 9780143106760 \$17.00

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (1988) (Ayebia Clarke) 9780954702335 \$13.95

Jamaica Kincaid, *The Autobiography of My Mother* (1996) (Penguin) 978-0374531874 \$14.00

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997) (Random House) 9780812979657 \$17.00

Total cost for these editions bought new: \$76.95

**Assignments**

Course Participation	20%
Close Reading Paper (3-4 pages)	20%
Reading Responses and Replies	20%
Final Paper (8-10 pages)	40%

**Grading Scale in %**

A (92-100)

A- (85-91)

B+ (80-84)

B (75-79)

B- (70-74)

C+ (65-69)

C (60-64)

C- (55-59)

D (50-54)

F (Below 50)

**Attendance and Preparedness:** Attendance at Zoom meetings is mandatory. Participation in discussion/online work is also important as the overall success of this class depends on the quality of your contribution. I expect you to come to class having done the assigned reading and prepared to contribute to the discussion in a significant manner.

**Reading Response and Replies:** You will post a 200-word reading response to your group discussion forum on Monday of each week. You can find the link by clicking the Discussion tab in Canvas. The reading response should include 3 components: 1-2 sentence summary of the text; a critical engagement with an aspect of the text. This can be the significance of a character, a word choice or motif that runs through the text (for example the function of Biblical allusions in *History of Mary Prince*). The critical engagement constitutes the bulk of the response. Conclude the response with questions that you have about the reading or that emerges from your critical engagement. 1-2 questions should be fine.

**Tuesday (6pm):** You will have until 6pm on Tuesday to read your peers' responses and respond to two. Your response should be substantial (at least 75 words). A good response should agree, extend, or respectfully disagree with the original post. Imagine that you are responding to an in-class comment or question from your instructor or peers.

**This means that you are making two posts a week: the first on Monday responds to the week's reading while the Tuesday post replies to two reading responses from your group.**

**Close Reading Paper:** This assignment involves the close reading of an assigned text. You can think of this paper as the analysis of an issue or theme in a selected text. A strong essay will be anchored in close reading and will analyze a passage or a few key episodes that illuminate the important issue you are investigating. The paper should be 3-4 pages long. Due 24 July at 5pm. Submit via Assignment link in Canvas.

**Final Paper:** You will develop a research paper with a clear argument that focuses on one primary text. Productively draw on a range of secondary sources for this paper, which will be assessed based on the force of your argument and the compelling power of your analysis and rhetorical maneuvers. The length of the paper is 8-10 pages. Due 14 August at 10pm.

Submit via Assignment link in Canvas.

**Writing:** We will devote class time before and after each assignment to discuss effective writing, do practice exercises, and offer feedback. Where patterns emerge in student papers, I will devote time at the beginning of class to tackling the issues. These class discussions will be supplemented with one-on-one meetings to discuss individual concerns.

**Students have an opportunity to revise the close reading paper, incorporating instructor feedback, for the final paper. You can also choose to write on a different text.**

**Classroom Decorum:** I always expect you to treat your classmates and me with respect in group conversations and in our synchronous meetings.

**Academic Dishonesty:** Cheating on examinations, plagiarism, improper or non-acknowledgment of sources in essays, and the use of a single essay in more than one course are examples of academic dishonesty, which may result in failing the class and/or suspension from the university. You can read Yale's policies on academic dishonesty here:

<http://catalog.yale.edu/undergraduate-regulations/regulations/academic-dishonesty/>

**Disabilities/Accommodation:** Please document your accommodations with the Resource Office on Disabilities and make an appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss how to maximize your learning in the class. The Resource Office can be reached at 203-432-2324.

**Writing Center:** Staffed by Yale undergraduates and graduate students, the Yale College Writing Center offers free, one-on-one writing help to all students enrolled in Yale Summer Session. To reserve an appointment, visit: <https://yaleuniversity.mywconline.com/>

## **Schedule**

Please note that this schedule is subject to change. I will let you know of such changes immediately.

### **Week 1: Slavery and Colonial Disposessions**

**Readings:** Mary Prince, *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave*  
Kathy Jetnil-Kijiner, "Tell Them"

Introductory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w9D88ST9qbw&t=4s> (Jetnil-Kijiner recites Tell Them")

**12 July:** Reading Response on *The History of Mary Prince, A West Indian Slave* due at 10am

Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

**13 July:** Replies to two Reading Responses due at 6pm

**14 July:** Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

## **Week 2: Inscriptions of Caribbean “histories”**

**Readings:** Jamaica Kincaid, *The Autobiography of My Mother*  
Derek Walcott, “Sea is History”

Introductory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YdHPZMfSOx8> (interview with Kincaid)

**19 July:** Reading Response on *The Autobiography of My Mother* due at 10am

Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

**20 July:** Replies to two Reading Responses due at 6pm

**21 July:** Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

## **Close Reading Paper Due on Saturday 24 July at 5pm**

## **Week 3: Writing the Birth of the African Nation**

**Reading:** Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o, *A Grain of Wheat*

Introductory Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kao7D04M1sA> (interview with Ngugi)

**26 July:** Reading Response on Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o *A Grain of Wheat* due at 10am

Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

**27 July:** Replies to two Reading Responses due at 6pm

**28 July:** Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

## **Week 4: Gendering Colonial Subjectivities**

**Readings:** Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*  
Chimamanda Adichie, “Jumping Monkey Hill”

Introductory Videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RPpDAFRnURU> (interview with Dangarembga)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D4pH6TxKzus> (Adichie Danger of a Single Story)

**2 August:** Reading Response on *Nervous Conditions* due at 10am

Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

**3 August:** Replies to two Reading Responses due at 6pm

**4 August:** Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

**Week 5: History's Afterlives and Global Style**

**Reading:** Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

Introductory Videos: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9\\_UnVZT0-0k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9_UnVZT0-0k) (on the caste system in India)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bmSDpvas4Pc> (interview with Roy)

**9 August:** Reading Response on *The God of Small Things* due at 10am

Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

**10 August:** Replies to two Reading Responses due at 6pm

**11 August:** Class meeting on Zoom from 1:00-4:15

**14 August:** Final Paper Due (10pm)